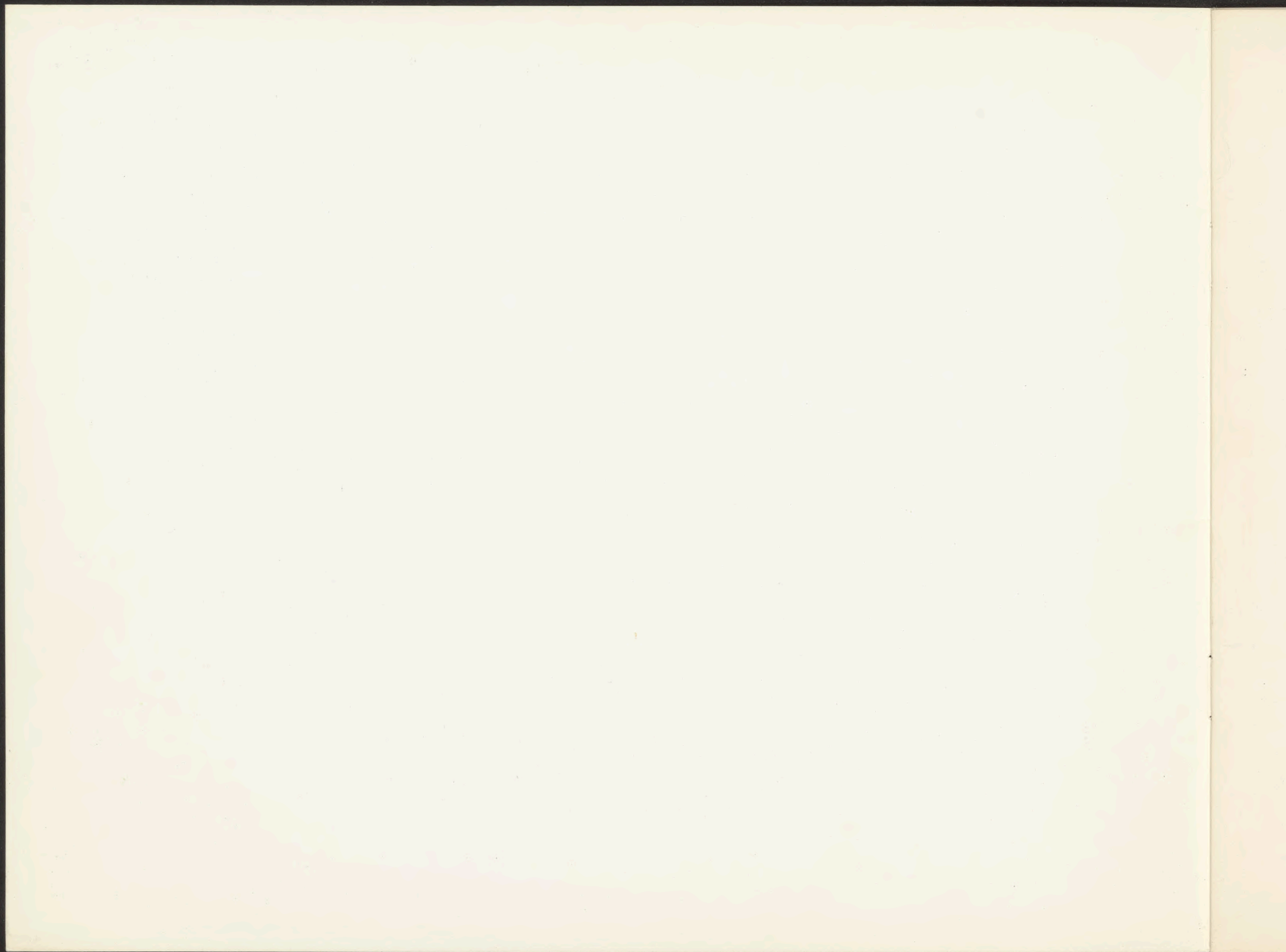




RAQUEL FORNER



Raquel Forner

On the cover "Red Labyrinth", 1967
(0,60 x 0,92 m.), No. 20 of the catalogue

Sur la couverture "Labyrinthe Rouge", 1967
(0,60 x 0,92 m.), Correspondant au No 20 du catalogue

RAQUEL FORNER

SPACE MYTHOLOGY

Paintings
from the series
Astronauts
Astro-beings
Mutants
Earthlings
Labyrinths
Astro-fauna

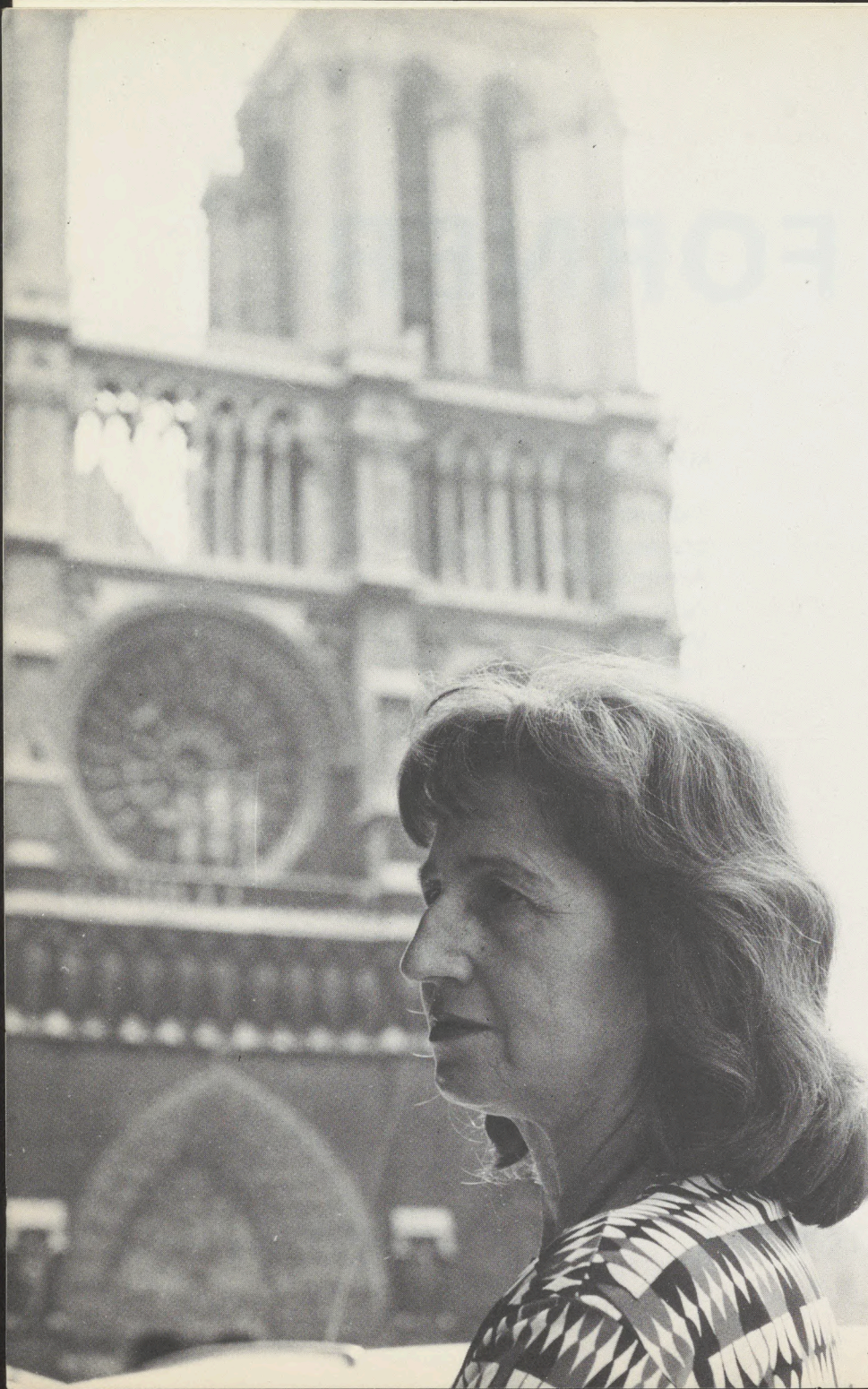
MYTHOLOGIE SPATIALE

Tableaux
provenant des Séries des
Astronautes
Astro-êtres
Mutants
Terriens
Labyrinthes
Astrofaune

March 15th to April 7th, 1974

Du 15 mars au 7 avril, 1974

THE CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART
WASHINGTON, D.C.



Under the auspices of
the Argentine Embassy

Sous le haut patronage
de l'Ambassade d'Argentine

Raquel Forner was born in Argentina; she acquired her skills as a painter in the 1930's in France as a student of Othon Friesz in Paris; she took part in the avant-garde movement in her own country; numerous exhibitions and prizes in Europe and America won her international fame. But is it really what matters about Raquel Forner? Her inspiration and art are without borders. Her destiny seems to make her a witness to the epic of mankind. She has a message to communicate and in order to do so she created her own plastic language. It has been said that her style is expressionist with traces of cubism; these labels do not stick to her works. She is an artist of our times but beyond influences. She deliberately keeps to single colours: white, black, ocre, green, yellow, red, blue, always contrasted with a dramatic sense; there is in her works a profoundly human feeling.

She was struck in 1937 by the tragedy of the Spanish Civil War which inspired her works entitled SPAIN; later came THE DRAMA (1939-47), a cycle inspired by the Second World War; later THE STANDARDS and FARSE (1948-52), and THE APOCALYPSE (1954-56). Raquel Forner does not attempt to engrave great events of our times in order to illustrate a history of this century; for her there is only one history: that of human destiny. Her canvasses speak of misery, fight, death, hope, love. They have the gripping reality of certain dreams.

In 1957 Raquel Forner discovered space; from then on her works can be closely identified with the exploration of space. One of my painter friends once told me: "The conquest of space is my greatest disappointment; I saw men who conquered the moon and looked at other worlds of infinite distance, land back on this earth; what do they do? They kiss their wives, put on their slippers and go and sit before the television set. I had hoped that they would be the first specimens of a new race; I had hoped to die knowledgeable, thanks to them, of God's secret; I will die a man". He stopped painting. Raquel Forner will never go to the moon but she took up her brushes to tell us this new story of space. Does she show us fabulous machines? Not at all; because the conquest of space is not a matter of technology. Do we perceive on her canvasses the abysses of interstellar space? Not at all. We see faces, human forms

Raquel Forner est née en Argentine; elle a reçu sa formation de peintre dans les années 1930, étudiant à Paris avec Othon Friesz; elle s'est identifiée au mouvement artistique d'avant-garde dans son pays pour jouir enfin d'une réputation internationale grâce aux multiples expositions qu'on lui a consacrées tant en Europe qu'en Amérique, et aux distinctions honorifiques que son oeuvre a recueillies. Mais est-ce là vraiment ce qu'il faut savoir d'elle? L'art et l'inspiration de Raquel Forner sont sans frontières. Son destin semble vouloir faire d'elle un témoin de la grande épopée de l'homme. Elle veut nous communiquer son message et pour le faire elle a forgé son propre moyen d'expression picturale. On a pu dire que son style était expressionniste ou qu'on y trouvait des traces de cubisme; ces étiquettes collent mal à son oeuvre. Il s'agit d'une artiste de notre temps mais qui a dépassé les influences. Sa palette demeure délibérément simple: des blancs, des noirs, des ocres, des verts, des jaunes, des rouges, des bleus, toujours ordonnés avec un sens dramatique; il y a dans son oeuvre un génie épique et profondément humain.

En 1937 la tragédie de la guerre civile espagnole la frappe et inspirera sa série d'oeuvres intitulée L'ESPAGNE; puis vient LE DRAME (1939-47) un cycle inspiré de la seconde guerre mondiale; puis LES ETENDARDS, LA FARCE (1948-52) et L'APOCALYPSE (1954-56). Raquel Forner ne cherche pas à graver les grands événements qui ont marqué notre temps pour illustrer l'histoire de ce siècle; il n'y a pour elle qu'une seule histoire: la destinée humaine. Ses toiles nous disent la misère, le combat, la mort, l'espoir, l'amour. Elles ont la réalité saisissante de certains rêves.

A partir de 1957, Raquel Forner découvre l'espace; dès lors son oeuvre s'identifie étroitement à l'aventure spatiale. Un peintre de mes amis me disait un jour: "La conquête de l'espace est mon plus grand désappointement; j'ai vu ces hommes qui ont conquis la lune, qui ont vu de plus près les autres mondes et des espaces infinis, redescendre sur terre; que font-ils? Ils embrassent leurs femmes, mettent leurs pantouffles et vont s'asseoir devant la télévision. J'avais espéré qu'ils soient les premiers spécimens d'une race nouvelle; j'avais espéré mourir enrichi grâce à eux du secret de Dieu; je mourrai homme." Il a cessé de peindre. Raquel Forner, elle, n'ira jamais dans la lune; mais

pressed into a density almost opaque; because the conquest of space is a matter for man.

With the sensitivity and strength which characterize Raquel Forner she attempts to extract now from space the secret of human destiny. In her work entitled "TRIP WITHOUT RETURN" one fragment contains an essential formula: $F + L = L$; $F - L = D$. Fight plus love equal life; fight less love equal death. Whether this is the message summing up our humanity; whether it comes from space or our universal consciousness, does not matter; Raquel Forner will probably never find the ultimate secret; but in her quest she is creating a new mythology and is thus achieving more than art. She belongs to the breed of the great fabulist and creators of myth, such as Homer who sang the greatness and vices of man while pretending he was dealing with heros and gods, such as Rousseau who made people believe in the good savage. A mixture of truth and vision; this is probably how Raquel Forner will be best remembered.

Michel Dupuy

elle a pris ses pinceaux pour nous raconter cette nouvelle épopée de l'espace. Nous montre-t-elle des engins fabuleux? Nullement, car la conquête de l'espace n'est pas une affaire de technologie. Percevons-nous sur ses toiles les grands vides interstellaires? Nullement. Nous y voyons des visages, des formes humaines pressées dans une densité presque opaque; car la conquête de l'espace est une affaire d'homme.

Avec cette sensibilité et cette puissance qui la distinguent, Raquel Forner essaye d'arracher, cette fois à l'espace, le secret de notre destinée humaine. Dans l'ensemble qu'elle intitule: LE VOYAGE SANS RETOUR un des panneaux énonce une formule essentielle: $L + A = V$; $L - A = M$. Lutte plus amour égale vie; lutte moins amour égale mort. Que ce soit là le message où se résume notre humanité, qu'il nous parvienne de l'espace ou de notre conscience universelle, peu importe. Raquel Forner ne trouvera sans doute pas l'ultime secret; mais dans sa quête elle crée une mythologie nouvelle et en cela, elle fait plus que de l'art. Elle s'apparente aux grands créateurs de mythes, un Homère qui chantait les grandeurs et les vices de l'homme en prétendant traiter des héros et des dieux, un Rousseau qui faisait croire au bon sauvage; mélange de vrai et de vision; c'est sans doute par là qu'on se souviendra le mieux d'elle.

Michel Dupuy



"Fleeing Mutant", 1971,
(0,73 x 1,00 m.), No. 16 of the catalogue

"Mutant en fuite", 1971,
(0,73 x 1,00 m.), correspondant au No 16 du catalogue

CATALOGUE

1. Survival	130 x 162 cm.	1973
2. Chimeras and Mutants	90 x 130 cm.	1973
3. Alienated Mutants	75 x 135 cm.	1973
4. Hostage Astronaut	53 x 129 cm.	1973
5. Double Gestation (II)	100 x 73 cm.	1973
6. Space Monster with Mutants	100 x 73 cm.	1973
7. Mutant Couple	100 x 73 cm.	1973
8. Space Monster with Witnesses and Astronaut	73 x 60 cm.	1973
9. Double Gestation (I)	73 x 60 cm.	1973
10. Symbiosis	73 x 60 cm.	1973
11. Monster with Witnesses and Astronaut	73 x 60 cm.	1973
12. Man-Moon	172 x 120 cm.	1973
13. Mater Mutant with Recollection	120 x 120 cm.	1973
14. Great Mutant (III)	160 x 120 cm.	1973
15. Great Mutant (II)	160 x 120 cm.	1973
16. Great Mutant (I)	160 x 120 cm.	1973
17. Astronaut with Televised Earthlings (II)	160 x 120 cm.	1972
18. Astronaut with Televised Earthlings (I)	160 x 120 cm.	1972
19. Games of Astro-Beings	73 x 60 cm.	1972
20. Conjunction	73 x 60 cm.	1972
21. Astral Totem (II)	197 x 60 cm.	1972
22. Astral Totem (I)	197 x 60 cm.	1972
23. Two Mutants with Astro-Fauna	130 x 200 cm.	1972
24. Fleeing Mutant	73 x 100 cm.	1971
25. Space Enigma (II)	184 x 60 cm.	1971
26. Astral Integration	73 x 60 cm.	1971
27. Gestation in Time	163 x 60 cm.	1971
28. Space Monsters with Televised Witnesses	130 x 162 cm.	1971
29. Astral Metamorphosis	160 x 60 cm.	1970
30. Space Enigma (I)	162 x 60 cm.	1970
31. The Astronaut who Lost his Face (Triptych)	195 x 215 cm.	1970
32. Return of the Astronaut	195 x 130 cm.	1969
33. Red Labyrinth	60 x 92 cm.	1967

CATALOGUE

1. La survie	130 x 162 cm.	1973
2. Chimères et Mutants	90 x 130 cm.	1973
3. Des mutants aliénés	75 x 135 cm.	1973
4. L'astronaute otage	53 x 129 cm.	1973
5. Gestation double (II)	100 x 73 cm.	1973
6. Monstre spatial avec des mutants	100 x 73 cm.	1973
7. Couple de mutants	100 x 73 cm.	1973
8. Monstre spatial avec des témoins et un astronaute	73 x 60 cm.	1973
9. Gestation Double (I)	73 x 60 cm.	1973
10. Symbiose	73 x 60 cm.	1973
11. Un monstre avec des témoins et un astronaute	73 x 60 cm.	1973
12. Homme-lune	172 x 120 cm.	1973
13. Mater mutante avec souvenir	120 x 120 cm.	1973
14. Grand mutant (III)	160 x 120 cm.	1973
15. Grand mutant (II)	160 x 120 cm.	1973
16. Grand mutant (I)	160 x 120 cm.	1973
17. Astronaute avec des terriens télévisés (II)	160 x 120 cm.	1972
18. Astronaute avec des terriens télévisés (I)	160 x 120 cm.	1972
19. Jeux des astro-êtres	73 x 60 cm.	1972
20. Conjonction	73 x 60 cm.	1972
21. Totem astral (II)	197 x 60 cm.	1972
22. Totem astral (I)	197 x 60 cm.	1972
23. Deux mutants avec de l'astrofaune	130 x 200 cm.	1972
24. Mutant en fuite	73 x 100 cm.	1971
25. Enigme spatiale (II)	184 x 60 cm.	1971
26. Intégration astrale	73 x 60 cm.	1971
27. Gestation dans le temps	163 x 60 cm.	1971
28. Des monstres spatiaux avec des témoins télévisés	130 x 162 cm.	1971
29. Métarphose astrale	160 x 60 cm.	1970
30. Enigme spatiale (I)	162 x 60 cm.	1970
31. L'astronaute au visage perdu (triptique)	195 x 215 cm.	1970
32. Le retour de l'astronaute	195 x 130 cm.	1969
33. Labyrinthe rouge	60 x 92 cm.	1967

BIOGRAPHY

Raquel Forner was born in Buenos Aires. There she studied at the National Academy of Fine Arts and in Paris she attended the courses given by Othon Friesz. In 1932, with the painters Alfredo Guttero, Pedro Domínguez Neira and the sculptor Alfredo Bigatti, whom she married in 1936, she founded the Free Courses of Plastic Art. She made cultural trips in Latin America, in North America and in Europe, where she lived several years in Paris.

INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS

Friends of Art, Montevideo 1956; Selecta Gallery, Rome 1957; Pan American Union, Washington 1957; Roland de Aenlle Gallery, New York 1958; Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro 1960; Müller Gallery, Buenos Aires 1929, 1936, 1946, 1947; Viau Gallery, Buenos Aires 1950; Bonino Gallery, Buenos Aires 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1957, 1958, 1960, 1965, 1967; Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro 1960; National Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro 1960; National Museum of Fine Arts, Buenos Aires 1962; House of Argentina, Paris 1966; Drian Galleries, London 1967, 1970; Aenne Abels Gallery, Cologne, Germany 1968; Provincial Museum of Fine Arts, S.M. de Tucuman 1969; Exhibition Halls of Osram, Munich, Germany 1969; Art Gallery International and Bonino Gallery 1969; Museum of Modern Art of Buenos Aires 1972; Wildenstein Gallery, Buenos Aires 1973; Robertson Galleries, Ottawa, 1974.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS ABROAD

Salon des Tuileries, Paris 1930; Modern South American Painters, Zak Gallery, Paris 1930; International Exhibition, Pittsburg 1935, 1958, 1964, 1967; International Exhibition, Paris 1937; Argentine Painting, Viña del Mar 1939; International Exhibition, New York 1939; International Exhibition, San Francisco 1939; Pan American Exhibition of Modern Painting, Caracas 1948; Argentine Painting at the National Gallery, Washington 1956; Inter American Biennial, Porto Alegre 1957; Inter American Biennial, Mexico 1958; Biennial of Venice 1958; International Festival of Art, New York 1958; South American Art Today, Museum of Dallas 1959; Latin American Art, Carthage, Colombia 1959; International Painting, Museum of Modern Art, New York 1959; 9 Painters of Argentina, Widger Gallery of Modern Art, Washington 1961; VI Biennial of São Paulo. Guest of Honour 1961; Woman in Contemporary Art, Duke University, Durham, U.S.A. 1963; Argentine Art of Today, National Museum of Modern Art, Paris 1963; Salon de Mai, Paris 1967; Latin American Print, Galerie La Tour, Geneva, Switzerland 1967; Latin American Exhibition of Drawings and Prints, Central University of Venezuela, Caracas, Venezuela 1967; Latin American Graphic Art, San Fedele Gallery, Milan 1967; 18 Argentine Painters of Paris, Argentine

LES DATES BIOGRAPHIQUES

Raquel Forner nacquit à Buenos Aires. Là, elle étudia à l'Académie Nationale des Beaux-Arts et à Paris elle assista aux cours donnés par Othon Friesz. En 1932 elle fonda conjointement avec les peintres Alfredo Guttero, Pedro Dominguez Neira et le sculpteur Alfredo Bigatti, qu'elle épousa en 1936, les Cours Libres d'Art Plastique. Elle fit de nombreux voyages d'étude en Europe où pendant de nombreuses années, elle résida à Paris.

EXPOSITIONS INDIVIDUELLES

Les Amis de l'art, Montevideo 1956. Galerie Selecta, Rome 1957. L'Union Pan-américaine, Washington 1957. Galerie Roland de Aenlle, New York 1958. Musée d'Art Moderne, Rio de Janeiro 1960. Galerie Muller, Buenos Aires 1929, 1936, 1946, 1947. Galerie Viau, Buenos Aires 1950. Galerie Bonino, Buenos Aires 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1957, 1958, 1960, 1965, 1967. Musée d'Art Moderne, Rio de Janeiro 1960. Musée National des Beaux-Arts, Buenos Aires 1962. Maison Argentine, Paris 1966. Galerie Drian, Londres 1967, 1970. Galerie Aenne Abels, Cologne, Allemagne 1968. Musée provincial des Beaux-Arts, S.M. de Tucuman 1969. Les Salles de l'Exposition d'Osram, Munich, Allemagne 1969. Art Gallery International et Galerie Bonino 1969. Musée d'Art Moderne de Buenos Aires, 1972. Galerie Wildenstein, Buenos Aires 1973; Galerie Robertson, Ottawa, 1974.

EXPOSITIONS COLLECTIVES À L'ÉTRANGER

Salon des Tuileries, Paris 1930; Peintres modernes sud-américains, Galerie Zak, Paris 1930. Exposition Internationale, Paris 1937. Exposition Internationale, Pittsburg 1935, 1958, 1964, 1967. Peinture argentine, Viña del Mar 1939. Exposition Internationale, New York 1939. Exposition Internationale, San Francisco 1939. Exposition pan-américaine de peinture moderne, Caracas 1948. Peinture argentine à la Galerie Nationale, Washington 1956. Biennale inter-américaine, Porto Alegre 1957. Biennale inter-américaine, Mexico 1958. Biennale de Venise 1958. Festival International d'Art, New York 1958. L'Art sud-américain d'aujourd'hui, Musée de Dallas 1959. Art latino-américain, Carthage, Colombie 1959. Peinture Internationale, Musée d'Art Moderne, New York 1959. 9 peintres d'Argentine, Galerie Widger d'Art Moderne, Washington 1961. VI Biennale de São Paulo. Invitée d'honneur 1961. La femme dans l'art contemporain, Duke University, Durham, U.S.A. 1963. L'Art argentin actuel, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris 1963, Salon de Mai, Paris 1967. La gravure d'Amérique latine, Galerie La Tour, Genève, Suisse 1967. Exposition latino-américaine de dessins et de gravures, Université Centrale de Venezuela, Caracas 1967. L'Art graphique latino-américain, Galerie San Fedele, Milan 1967. 18 peintres argentins de Paris, Maison Argentine Paris 1967. Galeries Drian, Londres 1968, 1969 et 1970. Première et deuxième biennales de la

House, Paris 1967; Drian Galleries, London 1968, 1969, 1970; First and Second Biennial of Latin American Prints, Institute of Portorican Culture, San Juan de Puerto Rico 1970 and 1971; Colour Prints of the Americas, New Jersey State Museum, U.S.A. 1970; Pan American Exhibition of Graphic Arts, Museum La Tertulia, Cali, Colombia 1970; Latin American Paintings and Drawings, John and Barbara Duncan Collection, Center for Inter American Relations, New York 1970; Today's Argentine Art, Kunstalle of Basel and Lugano, Switzerland; Museums of Munich, Bonn and Hambourg, Germany, 1971-72.

AWARDS

Golden Medal, International Exhibition, Paris 1937; "Palanza" Price, Academy of Fine Arts, Buenos Aires 1947; Grand Price of Honour, National Salon of Fine Arts, Buenos Aires 1955; Press Price, First Inter American Biennial, Mexico 1958; Grand Price of Honour, First Inter American Biennial of Art, Ika, Cordoba, Argentina 1962; Rotary Club of Buenos Aires Award, Painter of the Year 1973.

WORKS IN MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, Mexico; Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, U.S.A.; Municipal Museum of Fine Arts, Montevideo; Museum of Modern Art, Buenos Aires; National Museum of Fine Arts, Buenos Aires; Provincial Museums of Argentina. John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

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22 Painters (22 Pintores) by Julio E. Payró, Poseidon Ed., Buenos Aires, 1944.
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Four Argentine Painters (Cuarto Pintores Argentinos), Pampa Ed., Buenos Aires, 1950.
Raquel Forner, by Joan Merli, Poseidon Ed., Buenos Aires, 1952.
Raquel Forner, by Guillermo de Torre, Published by Gallery Bonino, Buenos Aires, 1954.
Dictionary of Plastic Artists of Argentina (Diccionario de Artistas Plásticos de la Argentina), by Adrián Merlino, Adrián Merlino Ed., Buenos Aires, 1954.

Gravure latino-américaine, Institut Culturel Portoricain, S.J. de Puerto Rico 1970 et 1971. Gravures en couleur des Amériques. Musée de l'Etat du New Jersey, Etats-Unis 1970. Exposition pan-américaine des Arts Graphiques, Musée La Tertulia, Cali, Colombie, 1970 et Musée d'Art Moderne, Bogotá, Colombie 1971. Tableaux et dessins latino-américains, Collection John et Barbara Duncan, Centre de Relations Inter-américaines, New York 1970. L'Art argentin actuel, Kunstalle de Bâle et de Lugano, Suisse. Musées de Munich, Bonn et Hambourg, Allemagne 1971-72.

PRIX OBTENUS

Médaille d'or. Exposition Internationale, Paris 1937. Prix Palanza, Académie des Beaux-Arts, Buenos Aires 1947. Grand prix d'honneur, Salon national des Beaux-Arts, Buenos Aires 1955. Prix de la Presse, première Biennale inter-américaine, Mexico 1958. Grand prix d'honneur, Biennale américaine d'Art, Ika, Cordoba, Argentine 1962. Rotary Club de Buenos Aires, Prix au meilleur peintre, 1973.

OEUVRES EXPOSÉES DANS DES MUSÉES ET D'AUTRES INSTITUTIONS CULTURELLES

Musée d'Art Moderne, Rio de Janeiro, Musée d'Art Moderne, New York, Musée d'Art Moderne, Mexico. Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dallas, Etats-Unis. Musée municipal des Beaux-Arts, Montevideo, Musée d'Art Moderne, Buenos Aires, Musée National des Beaux-Arts, Buenos Aires. Les Musées provinciaux d'Argentine. Le centre des Arts d'interprétation John F. Kennedy, Washington, Etats-Unis.

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22 Peintres (22 Pintores), par Julio E. Payró, Editions Poséidon, Buenos Aires, 1944.
Histoire de l'Art argentin (Historia del arte argentino), par José León Pagano, Editions l'Amateur, Buenos Aires, 1944.
Quatre peintres argentins (Cuarto pintores argentinos), Editions Pampa, Buenos Aires, 1950.
Raquel Forner, par Joan Merli, Editions Poséidon, Buenos Aires, 1952.
Raquel Forner, par Guillermo de Torre, Edité par la Galerie Bonino, Buenos Aires, 1954.
Dictionnaire des artistes plastiques d'Argentine (Diccionario de artistas plásticos de la Argentina), par Adrián Merlino, Editions Adrián Merlino, Buenos Aires, 1954.

Realty and Abstraction in Painting (Realidad y Abstracción en la pintura), by Angel T. Lo Celso, printed by the University of Córdoba, 1955.

Argentine Painting of the XXth Century (La Pintura Argentina del siglo XX), by Córdoba Iturburu, Atlantida Ed., Buenos Aires, 1958.

Raquel Forner, by Giampiero Giani, La Conchiglia Ed., Milan, 1960.

Contemporary Argentine Painting (Pintura Argentina Contemporánea) by María Laura San Martín, La Mandrágora Ed., Buenos Aires, 1961.

A no-return Trip (El viaje sin retorno) by Gyula Kósice, Published by Gallery Bonino, Buenos Aires, 1965.

History of Art in Argentina (Historia del arte en la Argentina) by Romualdo Brughetti, Pormaca Ed., Mexico, 1965.

Panorama of contemporary argentine painting (Panorama de la pintura argentina contemporánea) by Aldo Pellegrini, Paidós Ed., Buenos Aires, 1967.

Raquel Forner, by Rafael Squirru, Americas, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., August, 1968.

The Mirror and the Road (El espejo y el camino), by Guillermo De Torre, Published by the Spanish Press, Madrid, 1968.

Contemporary Art in Latin America by Gilbert Chase The Free Press, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1970.

Spatial Mutations (Mutations Spatiales), lithographies by Raquel Forner, texts by Michel Tapié, Michel Cassé Studio, Paris, 1971.

Raquel Forner — Space Age Artist, by Tomás Alva Negri, Américas, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., September, 1972.

Dictionary of Twentieth-Century Art, Phaidon, London and New York, 1973.

Le réalisme et l'abstraction dans la peinture (Realidad y abstracción en la pintura), par Angel T. Lo Celso, Imprimerie de l'Université de Córdoba, 1955.

La peinture argentine du XX siècle (La pintura argentina del siglo XX), par Córdoba Iturburu, Editions Atlantida, Buenos Aires, 1958.

Raquel Forner, par Giampiero Giani, Editions La Conchiglia, Milan, 1960.

La peinture argentine contemporaine (Pintura argentina contemporanea), par María Laura San Martín, Editions La Mandrágora, Buenos Aires, 1961.

Le voyage sans retour (El viaje sin retorno), par Gyula Kósice, Edité par la Galerie Bonino, Buenos Aires, 1965.

Histoire de l'art en Argentine (Historia del arte en la Argentina), par Romualdo Brughetti, Editions Pormaca, México, 1965.

Panorama de la peinture argentine contemporaine (Panorama de la pintura argentina contemporánea), par Aldo Pellegrini, Editions Paidós, Buenos Aires, 1967.

Raquel Forner, par Rafael Squirri, Américas, Etats-Unis, août 1968.

Le miroir et le chemin (El espejo y el camino), par Guillermo De Torre, Editions de la Presse espagnole, Madrid, 1968.

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Mutations spatiales, lithographies de Raquel Forner: textes de Michel Tapié, Atelier Michel Cassé, Paris, 1971.

Raquel Forner — Artiste de l'ère spatiale (Raquel Forner — Artista de la era espacial), par Tomás Alva Negri, Américas, Washington, D.C., Etats-Unis, septembre 1972.

Dictionnaire de l'Art du XXIème siècle, Editions Phaidon, Londres et New York, 1973.

COMMENTARIES – COMMENTAIRES

Pour sa première exposition individuelle, la galerie de la Maison argentine, qui vient d'inaugurer ses locaux au siège de l'ambassade, 82, avenue Henri-Martin, présente un ensemble d'oeuvres récentes (1960-1966) de Mme. Raquel Forner.

Raquel Forner est sans doute l'une des personnalités les plus représentatives de la génération argentine intermédiaire, c'est-à-dire de cette génération d'artistes dont la période de formation date des années 30 et qui s'est pleinement développée dans l'immédiate après-guerre. Son oeuvre — elle fut l'élève d'Othon Friesz à Paris en 1930 avant de retourner dans son pays — s'est développée au rythme successif de séries cycliques inspirées par les événements contemporains. Le style, dont la forte structuration cubiste se libère au fur et à mesure que s'impose dans le traitement de la matière et des couleurs un parti pris plus nettement expressionniste, suit les idées. L'histoire pour Raquel Forner est une chanson de geste en pleine action. La réalité de la vie est la légende en formation. Les titres de ses séries thématiques sont éloquentes: l'Espagne (1937-39), le Drame (1939-47), les Etendards, la Farce (1948-52), l'Apocalypse (1954-56). Initiée à partir de 1957, la série actuelle de l'Espace reflète, à travers les contradictions volontaires du récit, les alternatives d'angoisse et d'espoir que suscitent les étapes de l'aventure intersidérale.

La mythologie spatiale contemporaine sert de trame humaniste et de référence morale aux accents de plus en plus exaltés d'une vision cosmique: à travers la multiplication ou la juxtaposition des plans, l'animation de la pâte, le heurt acide des couleurs, la véhémence du trait, les dernières toiles de Raquel Forner entonnent le péan d'honneur des astronautes et des astro-êtres, un chant de foi et d'amour, d'humaine solidarité au seuil de la grande mutation de l'espèce.

"Arts Loisirs", Paris, 1966

PIERRE RESTANY

In 1962 the jury of the Bienal Americana de Arte, over which I presided, unanimously awarded the Gran Premio de Honor to Raquel Forner, an artist whose work was until that time unfamiliar to me. Subsequently I visited the artist's studio in Buenos Aires and the paintings I saw there fully confirmed the judgement the jury had reached on the basis of a single work.

Raquel Forner was born in Argentina and received her artistic education in that city, but she has travelled widely in Europe and spent some years in Paris where she attended the courses conducted by Othon Friesz at the Scandinavian Academy. Returning to Argentina she participated, from 1932 onwards, in the avant garde activities of that city, exhibited widely in South America, and in 1942 and 1947 was awarded important prizes. From 1957 onwards she was a frequent exhibitor in the United States and in 1959 returned to Europe for a short visit, during which she exhibited a number of paintings at the Venice Biennale.

Such is a brief outline of the career of this artist, but it is more important, in a short preface of this kind, to attempt some characterization of her work. If in a general sense it is to be described as expressionistic, one is immediately faced with the problem of explaining expressionism to a public (the English public) which has remained obstinately indifferent, if not positively hostile, to this important movement in modern painting. This attitude is all the more difficult to justify in so far as expressionism is essentially (that is to say, by historical tradition) a northern style, typical of the Scandinavian and Germanic countries with which we English have profound racial affinities. But for many years we have adopted the artistic ideals of the Latin races and perhaps our artistic decadence since the Renaissance is to be attributed to this unnatural affectation. It is surely significant that the re-establishment of an English art of international importance has in recent years been accomplished by artists who are essentially expressionistic, such as Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland and Francis Bacon.

In expressionist art the intellect is subordinated to the emotions. This does not mean that the work of art is an uncontrolled expression of feeling: on the contrary, feeling is only effective in so far as it finds an appropriate form. Expressionist art is as formal as classical art, in so far as form is a question of composition, balance, harmony. Expressionism sacrifices, as compared with classical art, coolness and precision, which are the geometrical virtues. In classical art the controlling intellect subdues the passions, eliminates the personal element in a situation, and presents us with a universal truth. In expressionist art the artist remains faithful to his feelings, to his personal experience, and presents us with a subjective truth. There can be no compromise between these two directions of the human spirit — the division runs through all the history of art and of philosophy.

The expressionist artist proceeds on the basis of an immediate emotional experience (the classical artist generalizes). It may be a personal experience of love, of joy, even of hate or fear. More likely it will be the artist's participation in a social experience, in an historical event. Several of Raquel Forner's paintings in this exhibition are concerned with the exploration of space, one of the decisive happenings in our time — she projects herself into the minds of the astronauts and creates an imaginary world of beings encountered by the astronauts in the labyrinths of space. It is a poetic vision of worlds beyond our world, and only a painter who is also a poet could create such a phantasmagoria. Raquel Forner has one other characteristic which I must mention — a grandeur of scale. Her

paintings are monumental — not necessarily in actual dimensions, but in conception. Her works are designed in sequences, not as isolated perceptions, and she can thus encompass themes of dramatic range and complexity. She is an artist who has the power to realize the cosmic vision of a William Blake or a Francis Thompson:

Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateway of the stars,
Smiting for shelter on their clanged bars;
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern clatter the pale ports o' the moon.

Exhibition Raquel Forner, Drian Galleries, April 1967, London.

HERBERT READ

And imagery? The astral beings, the labyrinths? The Arcimboldo-like preference for images within images, of discovering forms in the shapeless, this permanent ambiguity that characterizes her most recent discoveries? It is curious that, in spite of the exotic element of such caprices, at no time would we think of placing Raquel within surrealism. Her atmosphere is exactly the opposite. Such is the impact of her imagery that it is difficult to reconcile it with the world of dreams. On the contrary, her paintings have the diurnal lightness of total wakefulness. Something similar to this occurs in reading Dante. When although he passes through inferno, it never occurs to us to think that he is dreaming, but rather that he is sufficiently awake to perceive a reality that, because we are asleep, we fail to perceive.

Américas, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., August 1968.

RAFAEL SQUIRRU

Der erste Eindruck ist Farbe. Raquel Forner setzt Farbe in unzähligen Nuancen und Schattierungen, in Stufen und Steigerungen. Alle schöpferische Energie ist in diese Farbigkeit gelegt, alles Jubilieren auch und alle Trauer. Mit ausserordentlichem Empfinden für die Möglichkeiten koloristischen Zusammenklings hat Raquel Forner regelrechte Partituren ihrer Themenkreise entfaltet, kulminierend immer wieder in der sonoren Behauptung eines Rot etwa oder auch nur eines staubigen Weiss.

Und doch fehlt jenes rauschhaft-ekstatische Moment, das die europäischen Expressionisten charakterisiert, jene Künstler also, denen Raquel Forner nach der bizarren Intensität ihrer Malerei wohl am nächsten steht. Keine überbordennde Leidenschaftlichkeit bei ihr, kein schwelgerischer Schrei. Die Eingebungen sind vielmehr skeptisch gefiltert und mit einem formalen Mass ins Lot gebracht, das man als das mittelmeeische Erbe der gebürtigen Argentinierin bezeichnen darf. In ihren künstlerischen Anfängen, die bis in die frühen dreissiger Jahre zurückreichen, hat Raquel Forner gesehene, erlebte, erlittene Wirklichkeit surrealistisch überhöht. Eigentümlich kühles Pathos liegt in diesen Bildern, die zugleich deutlich werden lassen, dass menschliches, soziales, politisches Engagement stets Ansatzpunkt und Ziel war und blieb.

Ihr Werk ist gekennzeichnet durch seine Entwicklung in Serien, wie Raquel Forner selbst sagt, und: "Alle diese Serien wurden durch die Tragödien, die die Welt erschütterten, inspiriert, durch Revolution, Krieg und Diktatur. Sie spiegeln meinen Protest gegen die negativen Kräfte wieder, die versuchen, die physische, moralische und physische Integrität des Menschen zu zerstören."

So entstand die Serie aus Spanien (1937-39), Das Drama (1939-47), Die Felsen (1947/48), Die Parteien, Die Standarten, Der Schwindel (1948-52), Der See (1953/54), Die Apokalypse (1954-56), eine unmittelbar beteiligte Kunst, wie man sie in so globaler Thematik bei Malerinnen selten findet.

Seit 1957 stehen die Arbeiten unter dem Zeichen der kosmischen Eroberung. Sie sind dem Weltall gewidmet. Raquel Forner: "Ich habe die Serie in dem Jahr angefangen, in dem die ersten Satelliten aufstiegen. Jetzt, wo der Mensch selbst der grosse Abenteurer ist, komme ich zur Menschendarstellung zurück, aber nicht des Menschen auf der Erde, sondern des Menschen in seiner neuen Dimension: Der Mensch im Weltall."

Jenseits der Grenzen von Science Fiction hat Raquel Forner neue Bezirke entdeckt. Dort begegnet sie dem spirituell-spekulativen Problem humanen Sich-Veränderns im Raum, und dort auch ist es möglich, die Phantasie auf der Suche nach planetarischen Wesen frei schweifen zu lassen. Fossilisierte Argonauten, wie man sie in hunderten von Jahren auf dem Mond finden mag, treten in den Bildraum, Physiognomien, die Spiegelungen einer l'art brut sein könnten, und

groteske Gesichter. Sind es wirklich noch Astronauten oder nicht doch schon Mond-und Sternenmenschen, die da polypenhaft über die Weltall-Leinwand gleiten? Dämonen mit Fledermaushänden und verdrehten Augäpfeln, gierig sich reckenden Tatzen und Nasen, die gefährlichen Zinken ähneln. Schwartz-weiss dazu Reliefs des Irdischen.

Raquel Forner beantwortet Fragen nicht naturwissenschaftlich. Sie lässt Rätsel in der Beschwörung neuer Dimensionen. Aber gerade dieser Verzicht auf Entzauberung ist es, die ihrer Kunst hinter dem Schein spröden Loderns so viel Herzwärme gibt.

Vorwort der Ausstellung Raquel Forner, Galerie Aenne Abels, Köln, Deutschland, November 1968.

HORST RICHTER

Quando alla Biennale di Venezia del 1958 potei vedere in originale le opere di Raquel Forner, l'impressione provata davanti a foto e riproduzioni trovò precisa conferma: si trattava di una singolare qualità di pittura, diversa dalle consuete forme europee, un po' distaccata anche nei motivi, eppure con una intensità e verità di impostazione, di spinta interna, da farsi sentire vicina a chiunque ne prendesse contatto diretto. Queste immagini, anche quando il processo che le aveva generate potesse rimanere di difficile chiarimento, parlavano con sufficiente energia per comunicare visioni dove antiche memorie assimilavano presenze contemporanee fino a realizzare una realtà di divenire incontestabile.

Qualche breve incontro con la pittrice aggiunse nuove garanzie a l'opinione che mi ero fatta: la sua vigoria umana è talmente dispensatrice che non può non riflettersi utilmente nell'assetto pittorico che essa compone. Perciò questa pittrice argentina è compatriota a pieno titolo di quel paese fantasioso che l'arte sa sempre allestire perchè l'uomo non si perda nelle varie lusinghe mondane.

Biennale di Venezia, 1969.

UMBRO APOLLONIO

As time goes by, Raquel Forner's painting is more and more centering, with an ever increasing zeal, to rigorously current subjects. This would entail a danger if they would only reflect an anecdote. Raquel Forner is spared of such a danger. In different orders, she has refused everything that implies a subjection, a limit to her creative power; what she faces is not the mere copy of an objective sketch but the double adventure of her own self launched to the cosmos, and the penetration into a mystery that science, in its turn, tries to formulate. We should not wonder then if the Space Series self develops by grouping in various stages starting in 1957. Such a rich process cannot be embraced with only one intuition. A constant exercise of all creative powers is necessary in order to proceed with the development which possesses the touching transcendence of the "geste spatiale" to which Pierre Restany refers in his commentary.

The fact that we now see side by side most of the work that make such a feat allows us to value widely the extent of her effort. From a premonitory invocation to the Moon, in which the Planet still belongs to the unreachable realm of the fabulous, mixed with the earth elements, and which are personified by the bull, for example, she begins by making the present features faded in pursuance of something different. Raquel Forner is finding a middle way between what we know, the Earth, and what is hardly known, the Outer Space and the Moon. That middle way is the centre of her plastic concern. It is also a challenge. She can no longer paint man as he was or man as he is. She has to make out the image of the astronaut, of astro-beings, of the earthly people of the future. She has to conceive the transformation that takes place in the fauna, attend to the imaginary meeting of our world and the possible distant worlds; hint and foresee fights and discoveries, triumphs and defeats, revealing extases and deep rooting. Transfigurations, that is. Such seems to me the sense of the approach which was glimpsed at a little romantically in 1957, and now is confronting profound dramatic interrogations. An ancient philosopher said that in each one of us there hides a painter, a maker of images who fills with forms and colours the course of thought. Another, nearer to us in time, was amazed at man's peculiar structure, at his likeness with a labyrinth, from which nobody can escape and in which many heroes perish. Both appreciations can be applied to Raquel Forner's fertile and dazzled trajectory. Her cosmological images, her transfiguration of the everyday claimed by the progress towards the Unknown, her effort to overcome the labyrinthic nature of man and explore other scopes, place her among the most original and brave painters of our present day art.

Foreword of the catalogue, Raquel Forner exhibition, Art Gallery International, Buenos Aires, August-September 1969.

GUILLERMO WHITELOW

We are saddled with the necessity of attaining a generally understood function for art at the same time that we must assent to its claim to be an independent entity with its own dimension of existence.

To a certain extent this can often be achieved within the limits of traditional forms, though there is a problem here in dissassociating the style from the content. Raquel Forner (cf. *Art International*, vol. xiv/2), whose second London exhibition was held at the Drian Gallery in December, has partially solved this problem extent by the invention of a mythology which is entirely unconnected with the anecdotal or with the daily minutiae of existence. Her expressive technique is savage and emotive, reminiscent at times of some of the more Expressionist passages in Picasso's development. The paint is thick; the canvases sometimes divided into independent segments which join together, each representing a particular episode, like elements in some altarpiece. But these devices are channelled towards the expression of a cosmological nightmare in which the human species is mutated with stellar creations, and some strange, impossible dialogue takes place between the present and the future, the earth and outer space, America and the moon. Clearly a kind of human response to the exploding universe, incomprehensible on a purely intellectual plane, her visionary energy has found expression in literally hundreds of paintings, which fall into groups with titles such as "The Astrafauna Series", "Spatial Mutations" and "The Journey without Return". In some odd way — despite their apparent visual quality these works are reminiscent rather of Blake's prophetic writings or semi-mystical statements of that kind than of paintings as such.

With Raquel Forner the degree of latitude permitted to the spectator is restricted. The vehemence of her vision imposes itself on all but the most inattentive eye. With Camargo, at Gimpel Fils the ambiguous complexity of the bas-relief surface allows, indeed demands, a constantly varying interpretation — like the movement of corn in a field. There are two main kinds of work — in the one dowels of varying diameters and lengths emerge at different angles, catching light and reflexions, making varying shadows, forcing attention now on one segment of the surface now on another, so that the spectator is involved in a constant decision-making activity. In many ways, though he is primarily a sculptor Camargo's reliefs of this kind come nearer to certain forms of painting.

Art International, Lugano, Switzerland, January 1971.

BERNARD DENVIR

In all likelihood it was Raquel Forner who, before any other artist, sought to express the terrifying fact of our entry into the space age. When the first satellites were launched in 1957, she began to create her *Space Series*. Later, as she herself has told me, she felt a need to move away from the physical representation of man, and her painting became more abstract in its formal conception. Then man became the protagonist of that previously unconceivable adventure, and she went back to the representation of man.

.....
We cannot accept, therefore, the statement by the director of the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art, Jan van der Marck, when he writes that van Hoeydonck's "ten-year intimacy with outer space makes him the first artist of the space era." Raquel Forner, in Buenos Aires, was, without knowing it, his contemporary, if not actually ahead of him in conceiving human beings surrounded by the dangers of the universe. Van Hoeydonck's "cities of the future," the beginning of his "space art" in 1957, cannot be considered related to man's terrors away from Earth to the same extent that Forner's first efforts were. In any case, according to his own apologist Jan van der Marck, van Hoeydonck created his first images of "death and disaster in space, suggesting that the loss of human life is the price of penetrating outer space" in 1965, and Forner, who started to paint her *Moons* in 1957, created her *Lookout* in 1958, *Earth and Moon* in 1959, *Battle of Space-Beings* in 1961, *Black Starbird* in 1963, and *Moon-landing on Mount Taurus* in 1964, all works that allude unequivocally — although abstraction sometimes simplifies elements — to the mortal risk of space adventure.

Américas, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., September 1972.

TOMAS ALVA NEGRI

Raquel Forner lives and works at:
Humberto 1° 443,
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Raquel Forner réside et a son atelier à
Humberto 1° 443,
Buenos Aires, Argentina



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